

The Krider Gun Shop (The John Drinker House)  
133-135 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1055

HABS  
PA  
51 PHILA  
186-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1055

## THE KRIDER GUN SHOP (THE JOHN DRINKER HOUSE)

HABS  
PA  
1055-  
126-

Location: 133-135 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania--building demolished in May, 1955

Brief Statement of Significance: This building was a fine example of a typical mid-eighteenth-century Philadelphia corner residence.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

From Records of Philadelphia Historic Commission

135 Walnut Street only	Plan 1 S 14,
Erected between 1751 and 1760	Lots 71 and 183

GrantorGrantee

9/15/1751	Israel Pemberton, Rachael H/W A lot site on Walnut St. containing in breadth 26' and in depth on 2nd St. 51' (including 133 and 135 Walnut St.).	John Drinker, Bricklayer  (Not recorded see I 15 128)
—/—/—	John Drinker, Bricklayer The westernmost half of the above lot with a brick messuage on that was insured for 250 pounds	James Stevenson (Not recorded see IW-4-610)
10/6/1760	James Stevenson, Susannah H/W The above messuage was mortgaged to the Corpora- tion for Relief of Poor Distressed Presbyterian Ministers and of the Poor Distressed Widows and Children of Pres- byterian Ministers	John Henry Behrings, Taylor  (Not recorded see IW-4-610)
6/2/1767	William Parr, Esq. High Sheriff From John Henry Behrings, dec'd for 430 pounds	John McCalla, Taylor  (IW 41610)

Grantor

Grantee

John Clayton  
Charles Willing  
Admins. of est. of John  
Henry Behrings

John McCalla died intestate 18\_\_ \_\_, leaving five children: Daniel, Sarah, Thomas H., Anley, and Archibald C. McCalla. The above messuage & lot descended in equal parts to these five children.

(GWR-22-5)

(Note: In the following recital, I will underline the names of the above five children to try to make the many transactions clearer).

Daniel McCalla died intestate, leaving his part of above prems to his grandson Daniel McCalla Witherspoon. Daniel Witherspoon granted his part to Robert P. McCalla (see GWR 22 5).

Robert P. McCalla "granted & conveyed the said undivided interest inter alia unto" Jane H. McCalla. (see AM 18 69).

Thomas H. McCalla died intestate, leaving his part of above prems to his widow Sarah & above brothers & sisters. Sarah then granted her part of the prems to Robert P. McCalla, who in turn granted it to Jane H. McCalla (as mentioned above: AM 18 69).

Anley McCalla died intestate & his part of the above prems descended to his children: John G., William H., Rachael wife of Isaac English, Anley, & Daniel W. McCalla.

Sarah McCalla married William Hollingshead, who died. And later Sarah died making her LW & T 3/21/1820, leaving her part of the prems to the children of Anley McCalla the elder.

John G. McCalla granted his share of the prems to Robert P. McCalla (see MR 13 354), who granted it to Jane H. McCalla (as mentioned above AM 18 69). Daniel McCalla, son of Anley, the elder, granted his part of the prems to William H. McCalla, who died intestate leaving as heirs his widow Jane H. McCalla, his sister Rachael English, his nephew James McCalla, his niece Hannah Nones, and Eunice widow of John G. McCalla. Isaac English & Rachael H/W granted their part of the above prems to Anley McCalla the younger. James S. McCalla & Eunice Books granted their part of the above prems to Anley McCalla the younger. And Anley McCalla the younger & Mary H/W granted their part of the prems to Jane H. McCalla. Joseph D. Nones & Hannah H/W granted their part of the prems to Jane H. McCalla.

Archibald C. McCalla died intestate leaving two children: Robert P. McCalla & Jane H. McCalla, Robert P. McCalla granted his part of the prems to Jane (as mentioned above AM 18 69).

	<u>Grantor</u>	(ADB 14 263) <u>Grantee</u>
10/17/1856	Joseph Tatum William Tatum exs LW & T of Jane H. McCalla deceased Above prems 135 Walnut St.	<u>John Krider</u> , Gunsmith  For \$12,000 (ADB-14-263)
12/3/1897	John T. Siner Leanord D. C. Siner Exs will of John Krider, Gunsmith, dec'd.  133 & 135 Walnut St.	<u>John T. Siner</u> , Gunsmith For \$5,000 & a mort of \$5,597  (WMG 252 266)
9/1/1944	William S. Rau Sub trustee U/LW & T of John T. Siner, dec'd.  133 & 135 Walnut St.	<u>John Vena</u> *
7/31/1952	The Pennsylvania Company for Banking & Trusts and I. Edward Masters Exs U?W of John Vena	<u>Bookbinders Restaurant Inc.</u>

\*Information obtained from Records of Transfer, Registry Unit,  
Department of Records, Plan 1 S 14, Lots 71 & 183  
Feb. 18, 1959 Richard S. Fuller,  
Research Assistant

2. Date of erection: 1751
3. Builder, supplier: John Drinker
4. Notes on original plan, construction, and alterations:  
It is thought that the front sections of 133 and 135  
Walnut Street were built as one operation in 1751.  
The buildings were the same height and the roof construc-  
tion was the same throughout with the exception of the  
wide shingle lath on the north slope of 133. The plate  
and sill ran past the party wall at the eave line on  
the north side. The south chimney was constructed in one  
operation to serve fireplaces on both sides of the party

wall. The vestiges of cove-shaped nailers at the joist ends in 133 suggested that the plaster cove cornice ran across both buildings on the north and south elevations. The elevations were quite different but there were indications that the 133 facade was rebuilt at a later date. The brickwork in 133 was laid up in common bond while the 135 facade was laid up in Flemish bond with black glazed headers and queen's closers. The windows were of different size and proportion than those in 135, and were placed on different levels. The very narrow muntins would indicate that the sash was not original and was probably contemporary with the rebuilding of the facade.

The rear section of 135 Walnut was not original but the exact date or dates of construction was not determined.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: John Drinker was born (exact date unknown) in a log cabin located on the site later occupied by the Krider Gun Shop, and he is alleged to have been the first white child to be born in Philadelphia. In 1751, Drinker erected the building which was to serve as his residence for several years and as a gunsmith shop in the nineteenth century. The structure was occupied as a residence until 1826 when Vallee, a Frenchman, opened his gun shop. It is assumed that Vallee rented the space since no official title transfer was found in the deed books. Vallee died about 1845, and the business was purchased by John Krider in 1856, and in 1886 by Krider's partner, John Siner.

During the Revolution, the building was used as quarters for British officers and during the Civil War as a cartridge loading station.

- C. Sources of Information:  
Campbell, William M. (for the Independence National Historical Park). "The Krider Gun Shop." Draft of a report (never completed) on the history and architectural details of the Krider Gun Shop (John Drinker House). Prepared July 16, 1953, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Chain of Title--Courtesy of the Philadelphia Historical Commission

Prepared by John D. Milner, Architect  
National Park Service  
July 1963

John C. Poppeliers  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
July 1963

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The following information is based on the written data, photographs (including one old view--date unknown), and measured drawings collected in 1953 by the Independence National Historic Park, prior to the demolition of the structure in May 1955.
1. Architectural character: This building was a fine example of a mid-eighteenth-century Philadelphia corner residential unit with pedimented gable end. The building was apparently constructed as a double house with the facade of the eastern half (133 Walnut Street) apparently heavily altered in the early nineteenth century. Only the western half (135 Walnut Street) was used by John Krider as a gun shop.
  2. Condition of fabric: The brick bearing walls were in poor structural condition; they were out of plumb and had numerous cracks and separations. The south end of the party wall was extremely weak and formed a poor anchor for the iron tie straps securing the Walnut Street wall, thereby causing a one-inch separation at that point. The timber framing was badly deteriorated in spots and was in a generally weakened condition.
- B. Technical Description of Exterior:
1. Number of stories: Both sections of front building were three-and-a-half stories, back building of 133 was one story, and backbuilding of 135 was three stories.
  2. Number of bays: Four-bay front
  3. Over-all dimensions: 27'-1 1/2" x 47'-1 1/2"
  4. Layout, shape: Rectangular
  5. Foundations: Brick foundation walls
  6. Wall construction: 133 Walnut--red brick laid up in common bond (facade was apparently of a later date). Modern store front on the ground floor. 135 Walnut--red brick laid up in Flemish bond with glazed headers and queen closers, string courses at head and sill level of the second floor windows, cement plaster from grade to the lower string course.

7. Structural system, framing: Brick bearing walls with timber framing (joists span east-west and have pegged mortise and tenon joints).
8. Stoops, bulkheads: Square stone stoop at the entrance to 135 Walnut. An old photograph (date unknown) taken at the time of Krider's ownership shows the early cellar entrances; two on the west side with stone bulkheads and sloping wood double doors; two on the south side (one on each side of party wall) with low stone masonry bulkheads and sloping wood double doors. Although altered, the only bulkhead remaining at the time of demolition was the one at the northern end of the west elevation. Access to 133 Walnut was maintained on the south side, but the bulkhead was replaced by modern steel flush doors. The other two openings in 135 Walnut were closed and covered with paving.
9. Chimneys: Large rectangular brick chimney (flaring at the base) located at the center of the north slope of the gable roof. The south chimney (originally a twin) was cut off immediately under the roof line.
10. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: South (front) elevation:  
133 Walnut--modern glazed door with transom above, recessed as part of the modern store front. 135 Walnut--modern glazed door set in simple plank frame. The early photo shows both 133 and 135 with six-light doors (paneled at bottom) set in simple plank frames. West elevation: 135 Walnut--six-light door (paneled at the bottom) set in simple plank frame located near the center of the front section. Six-light door set in plain board frame located at the south end of rear section. North elevation: 133 Walnut--paneled door (partially destroyed) set in plank frame. 135 Walnut--four-panel door set in simple plank frame.
  - b. Windows: All of the old sash (on the second, third, and attic floors) in both 133 and 135 were replaced at an unknown date with modern 1/1 light wood sash. The old sash were preserved inside the building and is here described. The difference between the two facades is discussed in Part I.  
  
133 Walnut--All sash were wooden 6/6 light set in molded frames. First floor (south elevation)--the large old shop window was replaced with a modern

glazed store front. Second and third floors (north and south elevation)--two windows per floor. Attic dormers (north and south elevation)--one dormer on each elevation, the north being slightly wider than the south.

135 Walnut--One projecting bay window in the south elevation and two in the west elevation--the old 24 light wooden sash were replaced at an unknown date with modern iron frames. Second floor--two windows in the south elevation and three in the west elevation--9/9 lights (with exception of the center window in the west which is 12/12 lights), all set in original molded frames. Third floor--two windows in the south elevation, three in the west, and one in the north--all 6/6 lights set in original molded frames. Attic (gable end)--6/6 lights set in original molded frame.

11. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: There was a common gable roof over the front sections of 133 and 135, with the ridge running east-west. The original shingles remained but were covered with modern composition roofing on the south slope and standing seam tin on the north slope. The pent roof over the rear section of 133 had a slope to the north with modern composition roofing and a gabled skylight. The pent roof over the rear section of 135 had a slope to the west with modern composition roofing.
- b. Cornice: 133 Walnut--Front section (north and south elevations) molded wooden cornice with cyma recta, cyma reversa, and corona with unusual bed molding (not original) and beaded fascia board. There was evidence of nailers having been attached to the joist ends, formed to receive lath for plaster cove. Rear section--plain fascia board.

135 Walnut--Front section molded wooden (cyma recta, cyma reversa, and corona) and plaster cove cornice with ovolo bed molding, continuous around the south, west, and north elevations. Rear section (west elevation) molded wooden cornice (cyma recta with corona and ovolo and cavetto bed molding, (north and east elevation), plain fascia board.



- c. Dormers: Two dormers in the gable roof of 133 Walnut, one on each slope. The early photograph shows the south dormer with 6/6 lights, wood shingled roof (modern covering not determined) and horizontal wood clapboard siding. The lath on the interior was hand split with hand wrought nails. The north dormer was 6/6 lights with diagonal board siding. Modern roof covering not determined.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement, 133 Walnut: Long single rectangular space, rear section was one step lower than the front section. 133 was separated from 135 by a solid brick party wall.

135 Walnut: Rectangular space divided into front and rear sections by a 1'-1" brick partition. A storage vault (irregular plan) extended under the sidewalk on the south with access from the front section. Another storage vault (rectangular plan) extended under the sidewalk on the west with access from the rear section.

- b. First floor: 133 Walnut: Long rectangular space subdivided by three transverse wood partitions. 133 was separated from 135 by a solid brick party wall.

135 Walnut: Long single rectangular space.

- c. Second floor: 133 Walnut: Rectangular space (in front section only) divided by one transverse wood partition. Access to 135 through door at north end of brick party wall.

135 Walnut: Two rooms, one in front section and one in rear section. The rear room was two steps lower than the front room and was subdivided by modern wood partitions.

- d. Third floor: 133 Walnut: Rectangular space (in front section only) divided by one transverse wood partition. No access to 135.

135 Walnut: Two rooms, one in front section and one in rear section (floor level three steps lower than front room).

- e. Attic: 133 and 135 Walnut: Two rooms, one on each side of brick party wall of the front section.

2. Stairways:

- a. 133 Walnut Street: Enclosed winder stair, located on the party wall at the center of the front section, connected the second, third, and attic floors.
- b. 135 Walnut Street: New winder stair, located in the northeast corner of the rear section, connected the first and second floors. Wood ladders, located on the party wall at the center of the front section, connected the second, third, and attic floors (location of the original stairs indicated by the ghosts on the party wall).

3. Flooring: Not noted

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Some of the original plaster remains although many of the wall and ceiling surfaces have been stripped or covered with modern finishes.

5. Doorways and doors: Generally altered or destroyed.

6. Lighting: Modern electric fixtures.

7. Heating, fireplaces: Modern central heating. Building originally heated by fireplaces. The fireplaces on the first floor of both 133 and 135 were apparently removed or covered over. There were four fireplaces on the second floor and the third floor, two on each side of the party wall in the front section. The north fireplace on the third floor of 135 was altered and probably used as a forge.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting: The building was located on the northeast corner of Second and Walnut Streets, a busy urban intersection on the edge of the Washington Square East Redevelopment Area and was surrounded by mixed commercial structures.
2. Outbuildings: None
3. Enclosures: Party wall of adjacent building to east. City streets and sidewalks on south and west.

Prepared by John D. Milner, Architect  
National Park Service  
July 1963

Addendum to:  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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Washington, D.C. 20240